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CRS Report for Congress

U.S. Forces in Afghanistan

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Summary

As interest in troop level deployments continues, there remains an increase of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. President Bush announced in a February 15, 2007 speech, the Administration's plans for an increase in U.S. forces in Afghanistan, including a planned gradual increase of 3,200 U.S. troops on the ground. Since the President's announcement, there were higher troop deployment levels reported in Afghanistan in 2007 and 2008. This report provides official Department of Defense (DOD) statistical information on U.S. forces now serving in Afghanistan with comparisons to earlier force levels. It also provides brief official information on the military units extended or scheduled for the next rotation of duty into Afghanistan. As of June 1, 2008, according to DOD, the United States had 48,250 troops stationed in Afghanistan — 37,700 active component and 10,550 National Guard or Reserves. They are serving in two missions — a NATO-led peacekeeping mission and a separate U.S.-led combat effort called Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). For security reasons, DOD does not routinely report the composition, size, or specific destination of military forces deployed to the Persian Gulf. This report will be updated upon receipt of new DOD data. For additional information on U.S. forces, see CRS Report RL30588, *Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security and U.S. Policy* by Kenneth Katzman, and CRS Report RL33503, *U.S. and Coalition Military Operations in Afghanistan: Issues for Congress*, by Andrew Feickert.

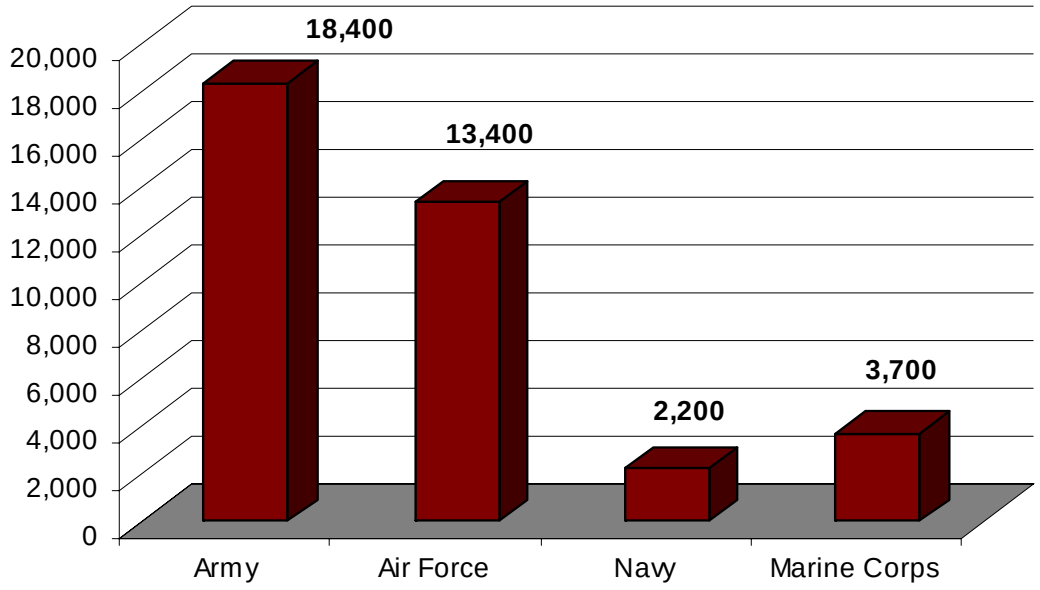
Force Levels

As of June 1, 2008, according to the Department of Defense (DOD), the United States had 48,250 military personnel deployed in Afghanistan. Of these, 37,700 were active component personnel and10,550 were National Guard and Reserves. **Figures 1** and **2** provide the distribution by armed service of active component personnel. These

totals do not include 23,000 military support personnel in Kuwait, or naval personnel aboard ships patrolling through the Persian Gulf.[1]

Amid concerns about U.S. troop levels, in a February 15, 2007 speech, President Bush announced an extension of deployment for more than 3,200 U.S. troops in Afghanistan as part of a new initiative in ongoing efforts to stabilize the security situation and to confront a resurgent Taliban. Since the speech on troop deployments by President Bush, the number of troops to Afghanistan fluctuated between February through November 2007. However, there has been a steady increase in troop deployments to Afghanistan since December 2007. Additional deployment information is available from DOD's Directorate for Information Operations, which posts quarterly reports on casualties and worldwide active duty military personnel deployments by region and country online at [http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/Miltop.htm].

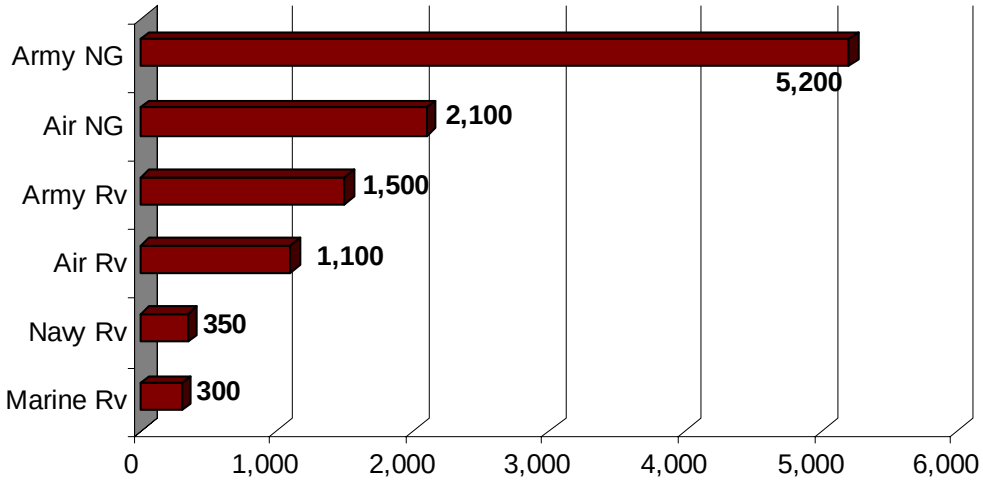
Figure 1. Active Component Personnel in Afghanistan (as of June 1, 2008)



Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data.

[1] DOD Fact Sheet, *Global Commitments*, December 14, 2007.

Figure 2. Reserve Component Personnel in Afghanistan (as of June 1, 2008)

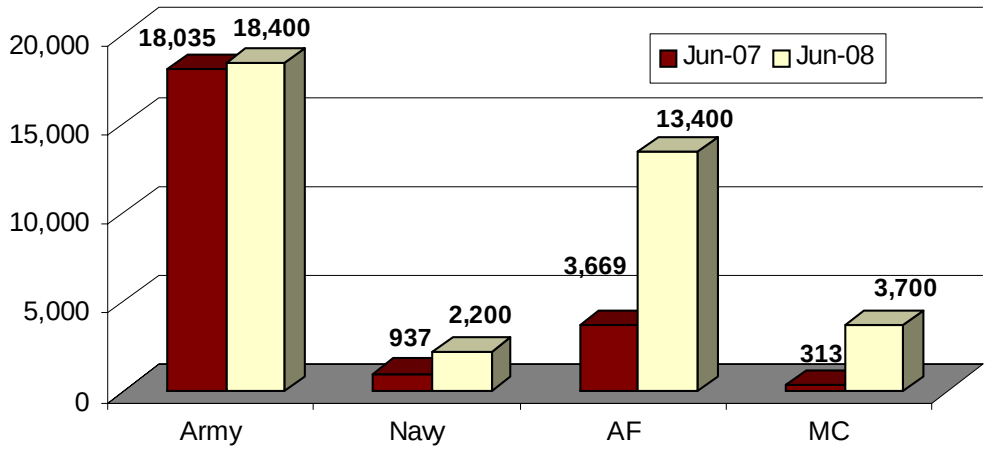


Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data.

Comparative U.S. Force Levels. Overall U.S. force levels in Afghanistan have been increasing since 2006, in both active duty and the reserve components. Based on DOD statistics, **Figures 3** through **6** provide comparative data on both active and reserve component force levels. Data in the figures below include month-to-month and year-to-year comparisons of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Senior Bush Administration officials reportedly stated that DOD is considering sending up to 7,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan in 2009 in response to a projected shortfall of NATO forces from other countries.[2] Of the current forces shown, about 60% of U.S. personnel serve in the NATO-led peacekeeping force called the "International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)," and the remainder continue to serve under direct U.S. command in counter-terrorism combat missions and Afghan security forces training. This mission is called Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The U.S. forces under NATO command have served in that capacity since October 2006, when NATO/ISAF took over peacekeeping responsibility for all of Afghanistan.

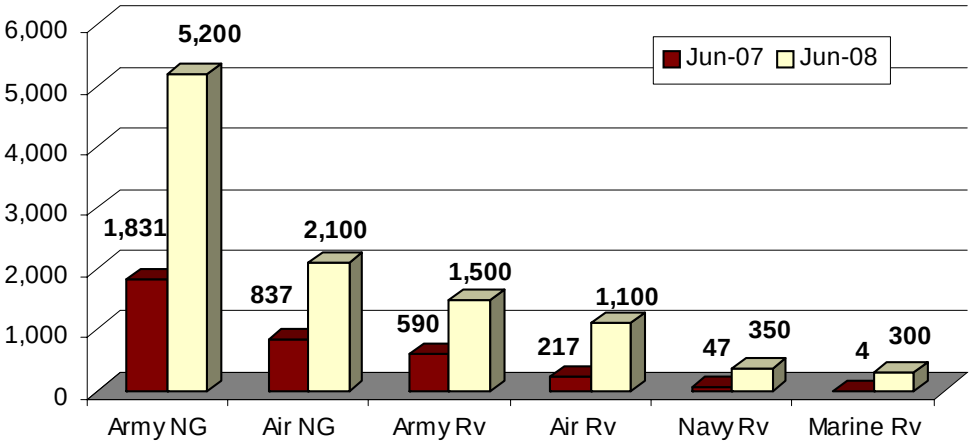
[2] "Pentagon Considers Adding Forces in Afghanistan to Make Up for NATO Shortfall," *New York Times*, May 3, 2008, p.A5.

Figure 3. Comparative OEF Active Component Force Levels (June 2007/June 2008)



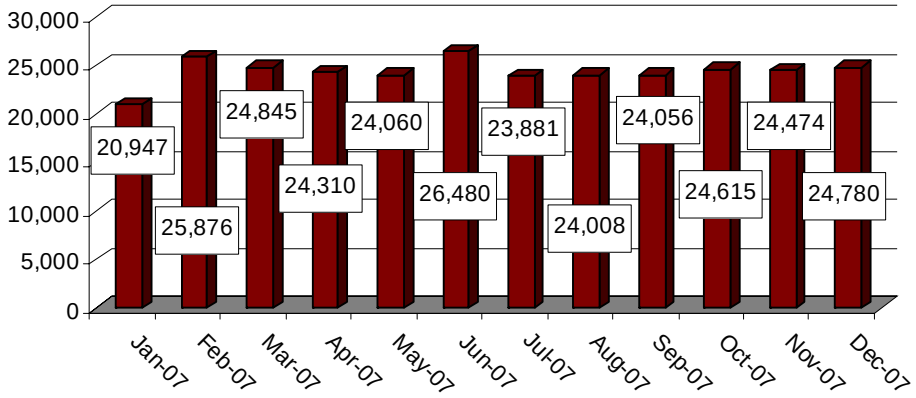
Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data.

Figure 4. Comparative OEF Reserve Component Force Levels (June 2007/June 2008)



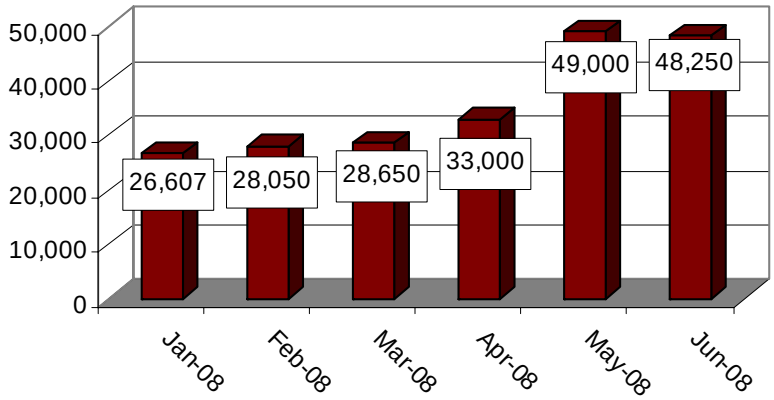
Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data.

Figure 5. Comparative U.S. Force Levels in Afghanistan (January 2007 - December 2007)



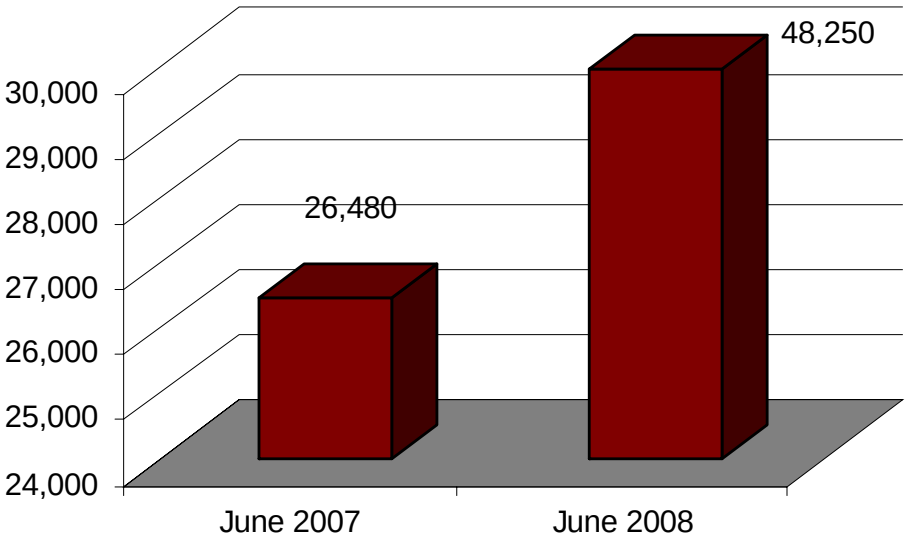
Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data, January 1, 2007, through December 1, 2007.

Figure 6. Comparative U.S. Force Levels in Afghanistan (January 2008 - June 2008)



Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data, January 1, 2008, through June 1, 2008.

Figure 7. Comparative U.S. Force Levels in Afghanistan (Years 2007 and 2008)



Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data.

U.S. Troop Rotations for Afghanistan. On October 19, 2007, January 15, and March 14, 2008, DOD announced its latest scheduled troop deployment adjustments and schedule for rotations to Afghanistan in conjunction with the two missions under which they serve. This 2008 schedule for the affected regular Army, National Guard, and Marine Corps units is summarized in **Table 1** below. Rotations to Afghanistan for Army and National Guard units currently last for 15 months, but are to be reduced to 12 months beginning August 1, 2008. Rotations for Marine Corps units last seven months.

Table 1. Operation Enduring Freedom Rotational Units

Military Unit	Home Military Base	2008 Transitions
Army and Army National Guard		
27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Army National Guard	Syracuse, NY	Early to Mid 2008
33rd Brigade Combat Team, Illinois Army National Guard	Urbana, IL	Late 2008
3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division	Fort Hood, TX	Late Summer, 2008
Marines		
24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)	Camp Lejeune, NC	Spring 2008

Source: Department of Defense News Releases October 19, 2007, January 15, and March 14, 2008.